

7091



410.45
S652

NARRATIVE

OF THE

SHIPWRECK AND SUFFERINGS

OF THE CREW AND PASSENGERS OF THE

ENGLISH BRIG NEPTUNE,

Which was wrecked in a violent snow Storm on the 12th
of January, 1830, on her passage from Bristol Channel
to Quebec.

By JOHN SMITH,

A native of New-York, and Chief Mate of said Brig.

Of seventeen souls on board but six succeeded in reach-
ing the shore. among whom was the wife and a son of
the captain, who was unfortunately drowned in an
attempt to save the life of one of his children—the
survivors, after enduring great hardships for 14
days, on a wild and uninhabited coast, were
fortunately discovered and conducted to an
English settlement by a friendly Indian.

NEW-YORK, Published by J. SMITH, price 12 1/2 Cts.
1830,

Southern District of New-York, s.s.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the twenty fourth day of March, one thousand eight hundred and thirty' and in the fifty fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America, JOHN SMITH, of said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the following words, to wit.—“ Narrative of the Shipwreck and Sufferings of the crew of the English Brig Neptune, which was wrecked in a violent snow storm on the 12th January, 1830, on her passage from Bristol (Eng.) to Quebec.—By John Smith, a native of New-York, and chief Mate of said Brig—of seventeen souls on board but six succeeded in reaching the shore, among whom was the wife and son of th Captain, who was unfortunately drowned in an attempt to save the life of one of his children—the survivors, after enduring great hardships for 14 days, on a wild and uninhabited coast, were fortunately discovered and conducted to an English settlement by a friendly Indian.

In conformity to an act of Congress of the United States, entitled “ an act for the encouragement of learning by securing the copies of maps, charts and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the time therein mentioned, and also to an act entitled “ an act supplementary to an act entitled an act for the encouragement of learning by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the time therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints:

Witness, FRED. J. BETTS.

Clerk of the Southern District of N.York.

SHIPWRECK AND SUFFERINGS
OF THE CREW AND PASSENGERS OF THE
BRIG NEPTUNE.

AFTER an absence of nearly three years, from my native country, on the 25th day of November, 1829, I shipped as first mate on board the brig Neptune, Captain Charles Mason, for a voyage from Bristol (Eng.) to Quebec; with the promise of there receiving my discharge, and with the intention of proceeding from thence to the city of New-York, where, I supposed, I had an aged and widowed mother living. I had flattered myself with the prospects of a short and pleasant voyage, but so far from its being realized, it was my misfortune to experience a sad reverse—the most remarkable events of which, I must beg liberty to relate as they occurred, without ornament or art—I am but little used to writing, the reader must not, therefore, expect to meet with any

manner of elegance in my stile. in which he will find nothing but the frank language of a sailor, which I hope, will be accepted as an apology for its incorrectness. We set sail about nine A. M. with seventeen souls on board, including the captain's wife and two sons, one six and the other eight years of age. The wind continued with little variation favourable, and the weather not unpleasant, until late in the afternoon of the 2d of January, when we experienced a shift of wind nearly a-head, which from its rapid increase, and beclouded and threatening aspect of the horizon, was considered as a sure indication of an approaching storm—at twelve at night, the wind increased almost to a hurricane; but having a staunch good vessel, and as we supposed a plenty of sea room, we, at its commencement, apprehended but little danger, but in this we too soon found our mistake, for having now reached a cold latitude, in an inclement season, and the wind rather increasing than abating, in the morning of the 3d, the sails and the rigging became so stiff with ice, as to render the brig almost unmanageable, and the sun being completely obscured and hidden from our sight by thick clouds, and preventing an observation, we were left to the mercy of the winds, which were driving us we knew not whither, but in the opinion of all, far out of our course, as it afterward proved—what we all suffered from the intense cold (particularly the wife and children of the poor unfortunate captain) can be best conceived by such of my sea-faring brethren, whose

fate it may have been to navigate these northern latitudes in mid-winter—several of our most able bodied seamen became so frost bitten, as to be unable to stand on their feet, and to add to our misfortune, our water froze to a solid cake of ice, which we were obliged to cut off in small pieces and dissolve in our mouths.

Such was our situation from the second to the twelfth of January, when in the evening about nine o'clock, in as violent a snow storm as was ever probably experienced by man, and which so obscured every thing from our view, as to prevent our discerning an object of the brig's size twice her length ahead. amid the roar of the wind and waves, the unwelcomed sound of breakers were heard, and in twenty minutes after the brig struck—alas, what a scene of distress now ensued!—exclamations of horror and despair became general—and the lamentations of the poor unfortunate female, and her two helpless children, were sufficient to melt the hardest heart!—they all clung to the husband and parent begging for that protection, which it was not in the power of any human being to afford them—the mast being loosened by the shock, quivered over our heads, and the sails were torn in a thousand pieces—indeed, the fury of the storm—the darkness of the night—the dashing of the waves against our stranded brig, and the prospect of an immediate death, which we were all in momentary expectation of—created a scene of horror past description—but in what

ever situation fate may place mankind, however distressing, it is an acknowledged fact, that life is sweet, and each one of us was endeavouring to preserve it by clinging or lashing ourselves to the wreck—but in this all were not successful, for at day's dawn it was discovered that four of our number were missing, whom it was conjectured became so frozen as to be unable to help themselves, and were washed overboard—yet contrary to the expectations of every other soul on board, the captain's wife and two children were found among the living.

The day dawned, but only to present us if possible with a more melancholly view of our situation—land was indeed discernable ahead, but without the appearance of being inhabited, and at so great a distance that an attempt to reach it with our boats or by swimming, appeared to promise nothing but the inevitable destruction of our lives, for the waves agitated by the winds rolled and broke with such violence against the rocks, which were not discernable above the surface of the water, that had any attempted it he must have run the risk of being launched back into the main ocean, or dashed to pieces against the rocks. Several hours passed thus, without our being able to conclude what was best to be done in our deplorable situation—to remain much longer in that in which we then were, all believed impossible, as the brig's stern was already stove in by the waves and there was no certainty that she would hold together from one minute to another; and should it have

proved otherwise, and we have attempted to remain another night on the wreck, all must have perished, as our fire had become extinguished and without a possibility to rekindle it, and if enabled to resist the calls of hunger the cold was too piercing to be long endured.

In this awful delima, we could do nothing more than to huddle ourselves together on the quarter deck, and thus attempt to contract heat one from another, placing the unfortunate mother and her two wretched offspring in the centre—while thus situated, little expecting any other deliverance than that produced by death, every suppliant hand was raised in petition to Providence to afford us some unforeseen means of escaping to the shore. There never could be a more fervent petition.—Heaven at length, seemed to look down with pity and compassion on our miseries—truly we could say the Lord is a prayer answering God—for when we little expected it, of a sudden, the wind began to abate, and the agitation of the sea in a measure to subside, insomuch that one of our hands who was supposed to be the best swimmer on board, having contemplated the distance to the shore, resolved to attempt the passage at the risk of his life, observing that he could but die in the attempt, and if such should be his fate he should conceive himself better off than to be doomed to pass another night on the wreck—thus resolved, he plunged into the sea, and we saw him for many minutes attempting to combat with the waves, which sometimes hurried

him forward almost to touch the shore, then washed back into the deep, disappearing for some minutes, and appearing again only to be seen dashed against the rocks—the poor fellow became at length exhausted and sunk to rise no more.

Our number was now reduced to twelve miserable souls, who could not but view themselves in a situation worse than that of their unfortunatè companion whom they had seen perish before their eyes, but whose sufferings were at an end. As we could now only look to Heaven for deliverance, we did not for a moment suspend our prayers and supplications, and I truly believe that we did not pray in vain, for the wind continued to abate and the sea became less boisterous, insomuch that at noon, we began to turn our attention to the boat, which although in a leaky condition, and so filled with ice as to render it extremely difficult to launch her, yet there was now but one alternative left us, either to attempt the passage at the hazard of our lives, or to remain where we were and perish together, for not one soul of us could have survived another night.

After much hard labour we succeeded in getting the boat overboard, and by casting lots, determined who of us should attempt the first passage—it fell to five, including myself and the Captain's wife and eldest son, which was all the boat would contain with any degree of safety. Before leaving the wreck a coil of spare rigging was put into the boat, one end of which was attached to the brig's foremast, with

which it was the intention of those left on board to warp back the boat if we should be so fortunate as to succeed in reaching the shore, which with but very feint hopes of doing we at parting shook each of our shipmates by the hand, and bid them an affectionate adieu, expecting that if we ever met them again, it would in all probability be in another world—the separation of the captain and his wife and little son, was affecting beyond description. All things now being in readiness, the word was given “cast off!” and in a moment our crazy bark was mounted on the white foaming surf to half the height of the brig’s main mast—we yet however possessed sufficient strength with our oars to keep her head to the shore, and when but a little distance from the wreck a prodigious wave took us in an instant to more than half the distance, and a second in quick succession threw us with violence upon a sandy shore.

As soon as we were all so fortunate as to recover our feet, we displayed one of our hats in the air, which was extended upon the end of an oar, the signal agreed upon of our safe landing, before we quit the wreck. In a moment it was answered by the boat’s shooting back through the foaming surf, by aid of the warp—and in about half an hour, we had the satisfaction to see the boat returning with those who were left on board the wreck. This was however a satisfaction which was but a few moments enjoyed—fate had determined that these poor fellows should be less fortunate than ourselves, for when

within about twenty rods of the shore, they were met and capsized by the surf! we now gave them all up as lost, as we conceived that not one could reach the shore unless by a miracle—in this we were however mistaken, for a great swell in an instant after threw the unfortunate captain within our reach, and we were so fortunate as to rescue him from a watery grave, and without his having apparently sustained very great bodily injury—but, destruction notwithstanding seemed to have selected this truly unfortunate man, as a victim! for no sooner did he behold his little son driven to and fro, and the sport of the foaming billows, than breaking from the hold of those who attempted by force to deter him, in a fit of desperation, he again threw himself into the sea and was himself soon compelled to yield to the unconquerable impetuosity of the surf, without being able either to afford protection to his child or to save himself—the lifeless corps of both were a few moments after thrown upon the shore, and produced a melancholly spectacle for his surviving companion and child to behold, and whose feelings on an occasion like this may be better imagined than described!—for more than one hour the wretched woman remained kneeling and weeping by the side of the lifeless bodies of her unfortunate husband and child, and could not be removed but by force!

By great exertion we were enabled to save the life of one more of our shipmates which the last boat contained—when nearly exhausted, he was so fortunate

us to seize upon a rope which was thrown to him, and by which he was drawn on shore—the number of survivors now amounted to no more than six, among whom was the cook, who fortunately had been so wise as to secure fire-works in his pocket previous to leaving the brig, which had he failed to have done, our situations would have been no better than while on board the wreck, for as the day was now far spent and the night approaching, we must have all perished with the cold had we been deprived of the means of enkindling a fire.

For our better security for the night, we all retired to a thicket a few rods distant from where we landed, and where, although we were careful to keep up a large fire, we suffered very much from the sharpness of the wind, against which we had but an indifferent shelter—the trees by which we were encompassed were insufficient to protect us from the snow, which still continued to fall in immense flakes—while it cut through our clothes on the side exposed to the fire, on our backs it formed a heap which we were obliged to shake off before it froze into ice; yet so anxious were my shipmates to render as comfortable as possible the situation of the wretched female and her helpless son, whom fate had deprived of a husband and parent, and now placed in a situation to demand their protection, that their own sufferings and deprivations produced not a murmur—we all spent the dark, gloomy and stormy night, as comfortably as could be expected for persons in our

wretched condition, yet I think I may say it proved to all a sleepless one, although two nights had passed since we had enjoyed a minutes slumber.

The next morning we began to think more seriously on our condition, and what new difficulties would most probably attend us. We had esteemed ourselves fortunate when we succeeded the day previous in making our miraculous escape, but ceased to feel that degree of satisfaction, when we looked forward to our future safety—we were to all appearance cast upon a wild and uninhabited coast—we could perceive nothing before us but a thick and almost impenetrable forest, and the ground covered with snow of more than two feet in depth, and without any other sustenance than a small keg of beef, and a bag of hard bread, which was fortunately thrown into the boat in her first trip to the shore—nor were we without apprehensions of being attacked by wild beasts, or with meeting with savages, not less to be dreaded—for in either case we were not possessed with any thing that deserved the name of weapon, with which to defend ourselves—and to add to our wretchedness, we had dependent upon us for support and protection an afflicted and helpless female, and her son, a tender youth not exceeding eight years of age! indeed the more we reflected on our miserable and helpless situation, the more we were on the eve of being driven to despair.

As it was impossible for us at that inclement season, and with the ground covered with so great a

depth of snow, to attempt to penetrate the thick forest in search of inhabitants with any possibility of success, it was by all agreed that our wisest plan would be to erect with rotten logs and branches of trees, as comfortable an habitation as our means would admit, and which might serve us for a shelter, until the snow should become so diminished in depth, either by rain or the rays of the sun, as to render travelling less difficult—in doing this we had a twofold object in view, for by encamping near the sea shore, and in fair view of the wreck, which still lay stranded upon the rocks, exposed to a tremendous surf, from her it was not impossible that we might obtain some necessary articles of food or clothing; as it was the opinion of all that she could not hold together much longer, her stern having nearly disappeared and the surf making a clear breach over her—in this we were all soon sadly disappointed, for in the course of the night of the 13th, the wind having shifted from south-west to a north-east point, early in the morning of the 15th, not a vestige of the wreck was to be discovered; nor were we able afterward to determine whether she was driven from the rocks by the strong winds from the N. W. to sea, or sunk in deep water in the immediate vicinity of the reef on which she had foundered.

The dismal apprehensions we were under, in consequence of having our fondest hopes thus suddenly and unexpectedly blasted, can be better imagined than described—we found ourselves at mid-winter on a

wild, and apparently uninhabited part of the coast, fatigued, sickly, and almost destitute of food and clothing—nothing remained but to commit ourselves to kind providence, and make the best of our situation. On the 16th and 17th, we were employed in scraping away the snow and in building a sort of hut, under a cliff adjoining the sea-side, to secure us from the inclemency of the weather—here we remained four days, in as comfortable a situation as could be expected, as we did not want for fuel, the piercing keen air was in a great measure expelled from our hut, by the means of a great fire which we kept constantly burning night and day—as our only food was salt beef and hard bread, we contrived to freshen the former by removing to our hut a hollow stump, closed at one end and about four feet in length, and by filling it with snow and ice, which was dissolved by means of hot stones obtained from the shore, and into which after the ice had become so dissolved, we deposited our beef, cut into small slices, which were afterward broiled on the coals.

The situation of our unfortunate female companion, and her little son, was rendered as comfortable as our means would admit of. nor ought I to omit mentioning, that they both exhibited that degree of fortitude, and resignation, amid their afflictions, that I should have supposed hardly possible had I not been an eye witness thereto—while we were employed either in repairing or improving our hut or in devising means to render our food more palatable, their time

was almost wholly occupied in solemn devotion—in prayer to the Almighty, supplicating his mercy and kind interposition in our favour! and I am not now ashamed to say to the world, that as regards the well-fare of my own immortal soul, the prayers of the pious mother, and her little Son (particularly the latter, but eight years of age) were productive of the most happy effects—it sent arrows of conviction to my soul, and caused me to cry aloud "Lord have mercy on me, the chiefest of sinners!"—yes, reader, of whatever persuasion you may be, permit me to declare to you, that that important happy moment, will never be forgotten by me, when the Almighty in his infinite goodness, was pleased to speak peace to my soul! when I met with conviction and conversion in the wild wilderness, through the instrumentality of a child!—and who, permit me to ask, can for a moment doubt the goodness, the omnipresence of the Almighty? to Him we have the promise that we shall have free access, whatever may be our condition, or in whatever situation fate may have placed us, if we come to Him with a contrite and penitent heart!

Early in the morning of the 20th, discovering that the snow had become sufficiently encrusted to bear us, it was by us resolved that three of our number should set out on a tour of discovery, leaving one to remain with Mrs. Mason and her son, until our return, which we promised should be in four days, should we be so fortunate as to make or should we not make any discovery of inhabitants—providing for

ourselves a sufficient quantity of the food to which we had been confined for several days, about 10 A. M. we took an affectionate leave of those we left behind (having requested their prayers in our absence) we set forth with heavy hearts, taking a course westward, as nearly as we could judge by the points of the compass. We found our course frequently impeded in the first day's travel, by thick underwood, and almost impenetrable swamps; to avoid which, in some instances we were compelled to take circuitous routs of some miles. Nearly an hour before sunset, we became so exhausted as to compel us to seek a shelter for the night, beneath a shelving rock, where, with a comfortable fire, we were enabled to repose until morning.

We early arose, and after partaking of our humble repast, we again put forward, still bending our course to the west, but without meeting with any thing to encourage us that we should be so fortunate as to discover the object of our pursuit. We this day as in the former, met with many obstacles in our journey almost of too difficult a nature to be surmounted by us, in our weak and debilitated state—sometimes high and impassable ledges, would present themselves in our course, and then a wide extending miry marsh, thickly covered with small brush, and creeping briars, and through which it is not improbable that no human being ever attempted to pass.

Having about noon arrived in an exhausted state, on the summit of a very high hill, and beholding noth-

ing around us on either side but a boundless forest, as far as the eye sight could extend, we came to a halt, and held a consultation among ourselves whether it would not be more prudent for us to return, than to attempt to proceed any further in the course we had been travelling, and without the most distant prospect of meeting with deliverance; as in our whole journey, we had not met with any thing that could satisfy us, that the country was inhabited by human beings; but not improbably abounded with wild animals, peculiar to a cold climate; as we several times saw at a distance what, from information, we have since received, we suppose might have been bears, moose, and deer. There was indeed another very great reason why we should return, for by penetrating further into the country, we possibly might meet with insuperable difficulties, in our attempts to find our way back again to what we now called our home—it was therefore concluded by all that it was most prudent to retrace our steps, while our tracks still visible on the surface of the snow, would serve us for a guide.

Without meeting with any thing remarkable, or worthy of notice, we succeeded in reaching the hut late in the afternoon of the 23d, and found our companions in the same condition as when we left them.—We had no occasion to inform them of our ill success, as regarded the flattering hopes that we had entertained of meeting with inhabitants, they too plainly saw it depicted in our countenances, and for the moment, caused in all a very great depression of

spirits—and how could it be otherwise?—we had thought ourselves peculiarly fortunate in reaching the shore, but we began now to think ourselves less so, than those of our shipmates who had found a watery grave, and whose troubles were at an end!—our prospects were indeed gloomy beyond description!—we had food sufficient but for a few days longer, and without arms and ammunition with which we could procure subsistence—our only cloathing was that which we wore on our backs, and at that inclement season of the year, the ground being covered with snow, of more than twenty inches in depth, prevented our obtaining any thing calculated to sustain us; nor did the shore afford shell-fish of any kind that we could discover—so that we could not but view ourselves the most wretched and miserable of all human beings! in a state of wretchedness from which death alone could deliver us!

But in this we were mistaken—there was one, blessed be God, that was able and willing to deliver us in his own good time—truly may it be said, that—

“God moves in a mysterious way—

His wonders to perform;”

on an uninhabited coast, in the midst of a wild wilderness, and amid all our afflictions and deprivations, the Almighty in his tender mercy was pleased to visit us in a manner we little expected—and there wrought a good work for us, which no man without his aid could have accomplished—even that of the conversion of our precious souls!—yes, through the instrumental-

ENGLISH BRIG NEPTUNE.

31

ity of a lad, yet of infant years, we were brought to see how unprepared we were to meet death—which we could not but believe fast approaching in its most horrid forms—it was a subject which probably had never previously occupied our minds, for a moment—for myself, I can say, that until within a few days, the necessity of a preparation of my soul for eternity, was a subject so foreign from my mind, that I had scarcely taken pains to acquaint myself with the meaning of the word “immortality”—nor do I think that my shipmates, who had been my companions in misery, had been less careless, in this respect—but I do indeed rejoice, that I have it in my power to say, that they too became so sensibly affected, and their feelings so powerfully wrought upon, by the prayers and pious exhortations of the youth, that they required little urging to unite with myself and the afflicted mother and son, in our supplications for mercy!—it was from Heaven alone that we could expect relief—and such was now the state of our minds, that it became a pleasing devotion for us almost every hour to kneel down, and to pour out our souls to God—and when not thus engaged, in listening to the pious admonitions of the dear youth, who, like an angel commissioned from on high, to administer peace and comfort to our souls, ceased not to exhort us to put our trust in one, who was both able and willing to save all who would come to him, humble and penitent, confessing their sins.

Nor ought we to doubt a moment that our prayers

D

were heard and answered—for when on the very brink of despair, doomed, as we could not but suppose ourselves, to end our days and to remain undiscovered and unburied in a wild and unfrequented wilderness—crowded and immured in a wretched hut, scarcely sufficient to shelter us from the piercing cold, the whole inside of which became lined with a crust of ice—and although on an allowance of one biscuit and two or three ounces of salt beef each, per day, yet of this there was not a sufficient stock to sustain us twenty days!—such, indeed, was our wretched condition, and such our awful forebodings, when there was experienced by all a sudden and unexpected transition in our minds, from the most gloomy and desponding reflections, to that of the most cheering sensations; to which nothing can bear a comparison, but a mind agonized in sleep by frightful apprehensions of approaching danger, and suddenly awaking and finding it but imaginary—a dream! All complaints and murmurs from this moment ceased—as not a doubt remained on the minds of any one of us, but that the Almighty would deliver us, and that the hour of our deliverance was not far distant.

It was on the morning of the 29th (having previously concluded it best among ourselves, that another tour of discovery should be made) three of us, who were considered in the best condition, set out for the purpose. We concluded to bend our course as before, westward—and as it was natural to suppose that there might be a less depth of snow near the sea coast,

on the very
not but sup-
remain undis-
unfrequent
wretched but,
piercing cold,
with a crust of
the biscuit and
per day, yet
to sustain us
wretched con-
when there
expected tran-
quility and des-
cheering sen-
sation, by
preparations
and find-
complaints and
not a doubt
but that the
the hour of our

having previ-
that another
one of us, who
set out for the
course as be-
suppose that
the sea coast,

we thought it most advisable to follow that, as near as the surf would admit of—in doing this we were encouraged with a hope, that we might possibly fall in with the wreck of our own, or some other vessel, from which something that might serve for food, or cloathing, might be obtained; which, if in the most perishable state, would have been very acceptable to us, in our then destitute condition. Our hopes in this respect were not however realized, and we had travelled all the day of the 29th, and a part of the 30th, without meeting with a single object, or witnessing a change of scene to encourage us. About noon, having come to a halt, on an eminence, and while in the act of sharing to each his allowance for the day, the report of a gun, to our inexpressible joy, was heard, and so distinctly, as to render it certain that it could not have been discharged at a very great distance from us.

The report appearing to have proceeded from a direction south west, we immediately started in that direction, uniting our voices and raising a loud halloo, every now and then, as we proceeded, which was finally answered by a loud shrill screech, or what is more properly termed, an Indian yell!—regardless from whom or what it might proceed, whether friend or foe, we redoubled our pace, and was soon brought in view of one of the tawney sons of the forest, clad from head to foot in a garment of fur, and armed with a musket—we now came to a halt, and for a moment paused—fearful that by too sudden an advance, the

Indian (who stood as motionless as a statue, with his eyes fixed steadfastly upon us) might become alarmed, and hastily fly from our presence, and thereby deprive us of the much desired interview. Recollecting at the moment, of having heard that among some of the Savages of North-America, a green bough was an emblem of peace, and of a pacific disposition, I seized a branch of pine, and with it advancing a few paces ahead of my two companions, exclaimed "fear not, we are your friends," which, to our great joy, appeared to be well understood by our new discovered friend and benefactor (as he afterward proved himself) who instantly replied in very broken English, "you no fear, me friend!"—on which, without further parley, we fearlessly approached each other, when presenting our hands, they were good naturedly grasped and shook by the savage, as a token of friendship.

Having seated ourselves upon a dry log, we gave him a brief account of our shipwreck, and the manner in which we had been enabled to subsist since that unfortunate event—to which he listened with much apparent attention, we communicating by signs what he was unable to understand by words. In turn, he gave us as intelligent account of himself, as his imperfect knowledge of the language would admit of—he represented himself to be one of the Esquimaux tribe, and pointing to the north, observed that he came from a country as far that way, as the great island (Newfoundland) was that way," pointing west—

that for several winters he had made these his quarters, for the purpose of hunting the bear and deer, for their skins; which in the spring, he conveyed and disposed of to a company of fur traders, who resided in a white settlement eight or nine days travel south-west (Bellisle)—that he had built him a comfortable cabin, or wigwam, in which he reposed nights, and which he represented as situated but a few hours travel distance from where we then were; that his only companion was a faithful dog, and that his hut was sufficiently spacious to hold us all—that he had provision in plenty, his dog and gun never failing to keep him supplied with fresh meat in abundance, and concluded by assuring us that we were welcome to make this our home, until we could provide ourselves with another and better.

Having informed him of the situation of our unfortunate companions, whom we had left behind, he readily agreed to accompany us to where they were, and to assist us in their removal, but stated that it would be first necessary for him to return to his cabin, to provide himself with some few necessities, and to which we willingly accepted of his invitation to accompany him—we found it as he had represented, a comfortable dwelling in every respect, and comparatively a palace to our own miserable shelter—we were presented with a well cured ham of venison (of which he had several) and of which, as the reader may suppose, we made a delicious meal—nor did we forget to return thanks to God, for this remarkable

manifestation of his kind and tender mercy, in sending that relief which we had so fervently prayed for.

Having sufficiently satisfied our appetites, we set out on our return, to bear the joyful tidings of our good fortune to our friends, accompanied by our kind benefactor, whom we found very serviceable as a guide, as well as for the important information that he was enabled to impart to us, as regarded the best mode of travelling. With revived spirits, we reached the spot of our destination about noon of February the second, and communicated to our friends the particulars of our adventures, and the good success which had attended us—which was received with a transport of joy—the grotesque appearance of our Indian friend, garbed as he was, in skins, on his first introduction, produced rather an unfavourable impression on the minds of our female companion and her little son, but a moments interview, was sufficient to remove all apprehensions as regarded their personal safety; and preparations were not delayed for an immediate remove from a place where we had suffered too much, for which to feel any degree of attachment.

Our greatest fears now were that Mrs. Mason, and her son, unaccustomed to hardship, would not be able to perform the journey—but in this we were very much encouraged by our Indian friend, who engaged to go forward, and at the distance of every mile to build fires—having supplied each with such garments of our own as we could spare, we set out about the middle of the afternoon of the same day, our Indian

guide proceeding us at the distance of about one mile ahead, and failed not in his promise in preparing for us a good fire at the distances mentioned; which was found not very uncomfortable, particularly as regarded our female companion and her son, who although the air was piercing, uttered not a complaint—ah, true it is, that the Almighty will “temper the storm to the shorn lamb!”

The knowledge which our guide fortunately possessed of the shortest and best route, enabled us without being much fatigued, to reach the place of our destination early in the evening of the 3d—so happily disappointed were my companions, (to whom I had attempted to give a feint description of the habitation of our Indian friend) to find it so much more convenient and comfortable than what they had anticipated, as to cause them almost to conclude that their troubles were at an end, and their deliverance complete.—The wigwam was of simple construction—three or four poles, of ten or twelve feet in length, were stuck in a circle with their tops gathered to a point, and secured by a few strips of green hide—the whole was covered with skins, of which there was a sufficient number to exclude effectually the cold, at the top was an aperture to let out the smoke, the fires being always built in the centre—near the aperture were hung hams of venison to smoke for summer’s use—the hut was of sufficient size to shelter eight or nine persons, very comfortably, the internal part of which was well lined with fur skins, and which also afforded comfortable bedding.

We were treated kindly by our Indian friend and benefactor, who spared no pains in rendering our situation (during our two days residence at his hut) as comfortable as possible—the greatest inconvenience that attended us, was the difficulty of conversing with him with that facility that we could have wished; he possessing no greater knowledge of the english language, than what he had obtained in his intercourse with the fur traders and fishermen—in his person, there was nothing very disagreeable or prepossessing—he was of small stature, inclined to corpulency, and of a tawny complexion—his face very broad, with a large mouth, and with black hair and eyes. His only companion was a faithful dog of the Newfoundland breed, and to whom he appeared much attached—he possessed a good rifle, and appeared well supplied with ammunition—his opinions of the immortality of the soul, or of the existence of a Supreme Being, appeared very restricted, yet when we explained to him the object of our religious devotions, he appeared much pleased, and manifested a disposition to take a part. For the welfare of the unfortunate mother and her little son, he manifested an interest, that would have done honour to one of more civilized origin—having humanly presented each with a pair of moccasins, and a blanket of deer skin, the better to protect them from the cold.

Although authors in most instances may be correct, in their opinions of the Indians of North America, that they are of a cruel, revengeful, inexorable dis-

position, that they will watch whole days unmindful of the calls of nature, and make their way through pathless, and almost unbounded woods, subsisting only on the scanty produce of them, to pursue and revenge themselves of an enemy—that they hear unmoved the piercing cries of such as fall into their hands, and receive a diabolical pleasure from the tortures they inflict on their prisoners—yet, by what I have myself experienced, and been an eye witness to, I well know that there are exceptions. that there are some of a much less unfeeling Savage disposition—who are social and humane to those whom they consider as their friends and ready to partake with them of the last morsel, or to risk their lives in their behalf—such an one indeed proved our friend and benefactor—nor could we but view it, as an instance of the interposition of kind providence, in our favour, in delivering us into the hands of one, so generous and benevolent—whose kindness we experienced in every instance;—how different would have been our situations had we met with one, who, more in the character of a savage, might not only have withheld that aid which we so much stood in need of, but might have robbed us of the few articles of cloathing which we had left, and then left us to perish.

Early in the morning of the 6th (having become much recruited, and made every necessary preparation for the journey) we left the peaceful asylum of our Indian friend—who, for a promised reward, had consented to accompany us to Bellisle, which he had

told us that with moderate travelling, we might reach in eight or nine days. The arrangements made for this journey, were, our Indian guide and one of our people were to lead the way, at the distance of about one mile—carrying with them such articles as were necessary to enable them to pitch a tent at the close of each day, for our accommodation at night—fires were likewise to be enkindled by them at very short distances—the remainder of us were to follow in a body, and to afford all the assistance we possibly could to our female companion and her son; for the better accomodation of whom, we had constructed a kind of sled, on which they were to be drawn where the woods and precipices did not prevent. In this manner we traversed a country, the very appearance of which, was sufficient to satisfy us that we could never, at that season of the year, have passed without the assistance of our guide—obstacles would have presented that it would have been impossible for us to surmount, and we must have perished with hunger or fatigue, in making the attempt.

Through the mercy of God. (meeting with a favourable conveyance from the main) we were enabled to reach Bellisle, in the afternoon of the 15th, alive, although nearly overcome with fatigue; which, so far from being unexpected, the reader will no doubt be surprized that we were so long able to support ourselves, under such severe trials, as we had experienced for the three weeks preceding. We found at Bellisle but a very few white inhabitants, and but two small fishing schooners, one bound to St. Johns,

and the other to Halifax—from the master of one I obtained on credit half a dozen jacknives, and as much powder, as probably might be purchased for four dollars, which I presented our Indian guide and friend, as a reward for his kind services; and to whom I feel that I yet owe a debt of gratitude, which I fear it will never be in my power to repay in the manner I ought—I can never reflect without the most grateful sensibility, on the kind offices of this humble son of the forest.

As Bellisle could afford us but a very few of the necessaries, which our enfeebled situations then required (the inhabitants having mostly left it, as they were in the habit of doing, at the commencement of winter) we concluded it best to improve the only opportunity which presented, or probably would present for some weeks, to leave the place—accordingly myself and surviving shipmates took passage for Halifax, and Mrs Mason and son, were received on board the schooner bound to St. Johns (Newfoundland) with the intention of proceeding from thence to Quebec, where she had relatives living. Of this unfortunate lady and pious little son, we took leave with mutual regret—they having been for more than three weeks our companions in misery, as well as for their religious counsel, so infinitely important as regarded our spiritual welfare, had bound us in the tenderest ties of friendship—but we parted with the happy reflection that our miseries were at an end, and on which account, no further anxiety remained as regarded our personal welfare.

After a somewhat boisterous passage, I in safety reached Halifax, where I had the good fortune the same day to obtain a passage direct to New-York, leaving the remainder of my shipmates in Halifax, awaiting a passage to Europe; I landed at New-York in the afternoon of the 28th, where, after much enquiry, I found that my mother was still living, and was then residing in the country, about five miles from the city—thither I repaired without delay, and feel thankful to God, for his kind mercy in restoring me (although penniless) to the arms of a kind and affectionate mother. In my three years absence from the land of my nativity, and from the presence of an affectionate parent, the Ocean has been principally my home; in which time I have been made the subject of, and experienced many of the disasters peculiar to those who navigate the deep—once I have been brought near the grave by pestilential disease—once miraculously preserved from drowning; twice from necessity put on an allowance barely sufficient to support nature—and, finally, shipwrecked in mid winter upon (to me) an unknown and unfrequented coast, with the loss (my life excepted) of every thing but the cloathing upon my back.—But, although it has been my hard fortune, to be thus deprived in an unexpected manner of the fruits of many months hard toil, of earnings which it was my ardent desire and intention to apply to the relief and support of an aged and infirm widowed mother—yet, I feel that I have thereby obtained a blessing, which I ought and do conceive of infinitely

more value—if it has, as I trust it has, been productive (through the instrumentality of a pious female) of the conversion of my precious soul (for “God moves in a mysterious way—His wonders to perform!”) I ought, and do view it as one of the most fortunate circumstances of my life—and feel that I can say with the Psalmist, “I know, O Lord, that thy judgements are right, and that thou, in faithfulness hast afflicted me.”

JOHN SMITH.

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

As the foregoing interesting Narrative, will probably receive an extensive circulation, and it is not improbable may fall into the hands of some, who may yet remain careless, and unconcerned, as regards the future welfare of their precious and immortal souls, a few closing moral reflections are, by another hand, hereunto annexed—which, while they may not prove unprofitable to any, should they be the means of awakening and reforming a single individual, of the class alluded to, the writer will consider himself amply repaid, for his trouble in penning them.

The melancholly events which attended Capt. Mason, and his crew, in their late voyage (as related in the preceding pages) were such as should teach all the uncertainty of life, the danger of delay in the great concerns of immortality from day to day—human life is “but a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away!”—time, like a long flowing stream, makes haste into eternity, and is forever lost and swallowed up in there; and while it is hastening to its period, it sweeps away all things which are not immortal. There is a limit appointed by providence

to the duration of all the pleasant and desirable scenes of life, to all the works of the hands of men, with all the glories and excellencies of animal nature, and all that is made of flesh and blood. Let us not therefore drest upon any thing here below, for Heaven hath inscribed vanity upon it. Mysterious are the ways of Providence; the same wheel which raises us to day, on the smooth, unruffled ocean of prosperity, may, before the morrow, roll us in the stormy sea of adversity—mankind in this world are ever subject to ills, infirmities and disappointments—pains and perplexities are the long lived plagues of human existence—but, Religion, is the balm that heals those wounds—it was this, no doubt, that preserved and supported the unfortunate Mrs. Mason, and her little son, when doomed to experience one of the severest trials of this life—when doomed to witness the melancholly fate of an affectionate husband, and parent, and a beloved child and brother!—it was at this trying moment that he sent Religion and reason to their aid, and bid them not to grieve for them whom they could not, and ought not wish to recall to this troublesome world. The consideration of the sorrows of this life, and the glories of the next, is our best support—dark are the ways of providence while we are wrapped up in mortality; but, convinced there is a God, we must hope and believe, that all is right.

Kind reader, whatever may be thy rank in life, if thou would wish to be happy in this world, and to secure a certainty of being infinitely more so in the world to come, I pray thee cherish Religion. Where can any object be found so proper to kindle all the benevolent and tender affections as the Father of the Universe, and the author of all felicity? Unmoved by veneration, can you contemplate that grandour and majesty which his works every where display? Untouched by gratitude, can you view that profusion of good, which at this pleasing season of life, his be-

neficent hand pours around you? happy in the love and affection of those with whom you are connected, look up to the Supreme Being as the inspirer of all the friendship which has ever been shown you by others; himself your best and first friend: first the supporter of your infancy, and the guide of your children; and next the guardian of your youth, and the hope of your coming years. View religious homage, as a natural expression of gratitude to Him for all his goodness. Consider it as the service of the God of your fathers: of him to whom your parents devoted you; and by whom they are now rewarded and blessed in heaven. Connected with so many tender sensibilities of soul, let Religion be with you, not the cold and barren offspring of speculation, but the warm and vigorous dictates of the heart.

The world which we now inhabit is a world of trials and temptations, and if we suffer our passions to take possession of us, it is no easy matter to break their force. If we once give a loose to our appetite, we know not when to hold the reign: nor is it in our power always to stop short of vice; so frail is human nature so strong the force of habit, that "it is easier to suppress the first desire than to satisfy all that follow it," is a maxim, the truth of which, many unthinking youth has, too late, been forced to acknowledge. Religion is the only balm for a wounded spirit. It is the only sure staff for the weary traveller through this wilderness of misery and sin. What an inexpressible grace does it throw over the countenance and actions of its sincere votaries! It purifies, it adorns, it ennobles our nature--- and as without the aid of a telescope, the shipwrecked sailor could never discern in the far off horizon the vessel that is to bring him relief, but might abandon himself to despair: so without religion man's views would be confined to a narrow circle of melancholy. ---Reflect much on the excellency and glory of re-

ligion. It is a friend in adversity. When every earthly hope fails, and the soul is ready to say of all human helpers, "miserable comforters are ye all;" then religion is a friend indeed. Are not those blessed, whom God blesses; safe whom he protects; and strong whom he strengthens? can any one say with David, "The Lord is my refuge, I will not fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains cast into the midst of the sea;" or with Paul, "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," can any one say this, without being unspeakably happy?

Oh, thou! who sit'st enthronéd on high,
In viewless splendour rayed;
Before the lustre of whose eye
The brightest glories fade.

Though thou art high, yet thou dost hear
The lowly suppliant's moan;
Though thou art great, each secret tear
Begems thy radiant throne.

When shafts of anguish wound the soul,
Thy healing balm is nigh;
When tempests rise, and billows roll,
To thee, alone, we fly.

Then hush! dark sorrow's weeping child,
Tost on this troub'lous sea,
In strains of peace he whispers mild,
"Fear not! for I'm with thee!"

men every
to say of
rs are ye
not those
protects;
y one say
will not
the moun-
with Paul,
or princi-
nor heigh,
be able to
s in Christ
hout being

high,

hear

scar

ul,

l,

child.